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John Carter Brown.

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LETTER

TO

DOCTOR TUCKER

ON HIS

PROPOSAL of a SEPARATION

BETWEEN

GREAT BRITAIN

AND HER

AMERICAN COLONIES.

LONDON,
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76

JOHN CARTER BROWN

RPJCB

A

LETTER, &c.

SIR,

THOUGH, with the old gentleman you mention, I am not *wholly occupied in the concerns of trade*, nor quite a ſtranger to the *riſe and fall of empires*, yet with him, I muſt own myſelf unable to comprehend the expediency of intirely ſeparating from our North American colonies, and declaring them to be *a free and independent people*, *over whom we lay no claim*; with him, ſir, I ſtart at the propoſal as at a ſpectre; and with his, *my mind is too narrow* to comprehend the rectitude of the meaſure; and yet, perhaps, we may not be juſtly chargeable

with all the narrowneſs of mind that you would impute to us; for though we do not preſume to hold the vantage-ground of the politician, yet are we not ſo bewildered with the conſiderations of profit and loſs, in the low province of the mere trader, as quite to loſe ſight of the cauſes that may conduce to the grandeur, ſtability, and ſafety of the Britiſh empire.

The old gentleman your friend, it ſeems, has furniſhed you "with ſome remarkable anecdotes concerning the ſmuggling trade that the Americans carried on with the French and Spaniards during the heat of the laſt war, even to the ſupplying them with ſhips and military ſtores for the deſtroying the trade and ſhipping of the mother country, and this in defiance of Mr. Secretary Pitt's circular letter to the governors of the provinces, forbidding ſuch a traiterous correſpondence, and infamous traffic." He has likewiſe informed you "from his own experience, that we gave a better price for their iron, hemp, flax-ſeed, ſkins,

ſkins, furs, lumber, and moſt other articles, than they could find in any other part of Europe; and that theſe coloniſts took nothing ſcarcely from us in return but what it was their intereſt to buy, even ſuppoſing them as independent of Great Britain as the ſtates of Holland, or any other people."

All this may be very true, for ought I know; but all this exhibits the object in a view ſo much under its real magnitude, that whether it is admitted, or whether it is denied, no proper concluſions can be drawn.

This project of a ſeparation is held up, I ſuppoſe, as a threat to the Americans; it would go, as it ſeems, to the hurt of their peltry trade; it would likewiſe go to the making them the moſt wretched and miſerable people that ever were on the face of the globe.

The words that Tacitus puts into the mouth of Petilius Cerealis, are ſo applicable to the preſent ſtate of Great Britain and her American colonies, that I muſt beg leave to cite them; *pulſis Romanis*,

ſays the hiſtorian, *nihil aliud quam bella omnium inter ſe gentium video*; and if you are at all acquainted with the hiſtory of the time that intervened between the diſſolution of the Roman empire, and till the ſtates of Europe became in ſome degree ſettled; (if, indeed, they are yet ſettled, and if the prediction of Cerealis is not verifying at this hour) if you are at all acquainted with the great miſery brought on mankind, by that event; certainly you would be exceedingly cautious how you gave occaſion for this tragical ſcene to be played over again in America; for moſt certain I am, that the ſame conſequences would follow the meaſure you recommend among a people differing in intereſt, climate, religion, and manners; the country every where overſpread too by a barbarous inhabitant who has not yet forgot the uſe of the ſcalping-knife.

There is the leſs occaſion to conſider the detriment that this ſeparation would be of to the Americans, ſince I ſuppoſe we are pretty well agreed here: you think

think the ſcheme would be detrimental to their trade; I think ſo too, and that it would be dangerous to them as a people.

The queſtion ſeems now to require, that we ſhould conſider the injury that Britain may receive from this ſeparation; and here I will beg leave to conſider the ſubject in a ſomewhat different light; I would wiſh rather to conſider the advantages that may accrue to Britain, and, indeed, to every part of her empire, from an union ſupported by a proper conſtitution. And this way of conſidering the queſtion amounts to pretty much the ſame thing; as whoever deprives us of an advantage we have a right to expect, does us a real injury.

It is requiſite here, to conſider the conſtitution on which this union is founded; and as it is impoſſible, at leaſt with me, to conſider the various claims of the reſpective colonies, reſulting from their different charters, I muſt take the liberty to conſider it as one conſtitution, common to them all; and indeed if Britain

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is ſtill to poſſeſs theſe colonies, and your pen is not fated to deſtroy the Britiſh empire in America, I believe it will be found neceſſary to have them formed under one conſtitution.

And here I muſt beg leave to hope that what I ſhall ſay, may not be taken to proceed from the vain conceit of propounding a plan: the queſtion before us requires this ſtep to be taken, ſince before we can properly judge of the propoſed ſeparation, we ſhould know what it is that we are to ſeparate from, or are united with.

But it is time to examine the mutual advantages that may, by a proper conſtitution, accrue to Britain and the ſeveral conſtituent parts of the Britiſh empire; I ſay the conſtituent parts of the Britiſh empire, becauſe I do not much fancy the name of colony, as I believe it generally implies ſuch a ſubjection to the power, and ſuch a ſubſerviency to the intereſt of the ruling ſtate, as Britain never has, or I believe deſires to exact; the idea I would wiſh to raiſe, is an idea of perfect equal-

equality, ſo far as intereſt is concerned; for with reſpect to government, to be ſure there muſt be a ſubordination, of one compact ſtate, where the ſeveral conſtituent parts ſhould mutually ſupport and adminiſter to the good of the whole.

There ſeems to be ſomething exceedingly analogous in the progreſs that the conſtitution of Britain has made to that ſtate of perfection in which we now find it, and the ſame courſe which it is to be hoped the conſtitution of the Britiſh empire is now taking: the former (if you don't take into the account the interpoſition of a benignant Providence) ſeems more the effect of chance than deſign: more a lucky hit, than the conſequence of any well-formed plan. And ſo little was the importance of civil liberty generally underſtood, even at the cloſe of the laſt century, that I believe it is ſcarce a doubt, but that had James II. let alone the religion of his country, he might have done what he had pleaſed with her conſtitution.

If we ſurvey the progreſs of our American colonies, there ſeems to be the ſame want of plan—the courſe, indeed, has been rapid, but whether bound, or for what end, ſeems totally to have been left out of the account. They were the children formed for the day on which they were produced, without any regard to the future : the offspring of the whim and caprice of the prince or his miniſter ; and the conſtitutions of ſome of them ſo amazingly abſurd, that we are left to wonder, without being able to account how they ſhould have been formed by any man that was ſober or in his ſenſes.

We are ſaid, by ſome means or other, to have ſucceeded pretty well, in procuring a conſtitution for Britain ; what we now want is, a conſtitution for the Britiſh empire,—and it is to be hoped there may be no difficulty to obtain it ; as, like all other things that materially concern the intereſt of mankind, it offers itſelf to the plaineſt underſtanding ; it is nothing more, than taking the conſtitution of Britain, and applying it to the

the reſpective provinces; the only difficulty that occurs, is, in giving to the members that compoſe the upper houſe, which, I believe, in the language of the colonies, is called the Council, that independency that the peers may be ſuppoſed to poſſeſs here; and this, perhaps, may be effected by annexing a high qualification and ſome dignity to ſeats in that houſe, and by making the appointment continue for life.

An excluſive power ſhould be given to every province of raiſing their internal taxes themſelves; I ſay internal taxes, more in conformity to a mode of ſpeaking that prevails, than from its including any thing that is material; for if internal and external taxes are not, as they have been ſaid to be, a diſtinction without a difference, it is at leaſt a diſtinction of no conſequence, for if the tax really is, what is underſtood by, external, there are methods of Great Britain's acquiring it, without injury to the conſtitution of the empire, ſo long as the navigation act, that great bulwark of the ſtate, remains

inviolate. The tax upon tea, for inſtance, that occaſions the preſent clamour, is an external tax, and it would have been as eaſy for Britain to have levied this tax on the exportation of the tea from hence, as on the importation of it in America, with this only difference, that it would have been done more for the intereſt of Britain by the former method, as the tax would have been collected with leſs expence.

The ſupreme power of the Britiſh parliament over every part of the Britiſh empire, is a poſition that it is abſurd to controvert. There may be occaſions where it may be proper to exert this power beyond the common limitations of the conſtitution, but it is not in taxation that it ought to be exerted. It is not in the nature of things, or in the nature of man, to give us leave to ſuppoſe that any conſtitution can be formed for a ſtate, where there will not ſometimes offences ariſe; when they do ſo, and they are of that magnitude as not to be controuled by the ordinary power of the conſtitution,

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then is the time to call forth this ſupreme power; that is, extra-conſtitutional, if I may be allowed the expreſſion.—Almoſt all free ſtates have found it neceſſary to poſſeſs ſuch a power—the oſtraciſm of the Greeks, the power of the dictator in the Roman government, and the bill of attainder in our own, are of this kind; and whoever but for a moment conſiders the nature of the Britiſh empire, will ſee the neceſſity of ſuch an extraordinary power here: this is obvious from reaſon, but experience likewiſe gives her ſuffrage. Some years ago, when parliament took occaſion to animadvert on ſome offenſive proceedings of the Americans, they found themſelves ſo much at a loſs how to proceed, that they were obliged to turn back to an obſolete act of Henry VIII. and had they thought proper to have given effect to the reſolutions made at that time, they would have found the act moſt miſerably calculated to have anſwered their purpoſe: when, therefore, any part of the empire refuſes doing what there is a right to expect from it, or when it is guilty of

the ſtill more reprehenſible conduct of doing what may endanger the ſafety of the whole, it is then neceſſary that the parliament of Britain ſhould be furniſhed with ſome more effectual method of proceeding than it is at preſent in poſſeſſion of, otherwiſe a reſolution of the two houſes will be a mere brutum fulmen.

I would propoſe here an inſtitution ſomething ſimilar to that which made part of the Roman conſtitution, when the ſenate, on extraordinary occaſions, decreed, that the conſuls, and thoſe with pro-conſular power, ſhould take care that the ſtate received no detriment; and to this vote of the two houſes of parliament here, I would give the ſame force that it had from the Roman ſenate, that is, that it ſhould have power to ſuſpend every civil and every political inſtitution in that province that gave occaſion for the vote, and arm the magiſtrates, who, at that time, ſhould have the care of it, with abſolute power. However, that no future Kirks and Jefferies might be let looſe upon a people, the crown might

have

have ſome reſtraint upon theſe magiſtrates.

Though it may be abſurd to ſuppoſe that the whole Britiſh empire (even but ſuch as it is at this day) ſhould be repreſented at Weſtminſter, yet, perhaps, it might be the means of giving greater compactneſs to the whole empire if every aſſembly was allowed to furniſh one member to the houſe of commons; to have a right to his ſeat for ſeven years, and after that time to ſit till another ſhould be deputed in his ſtead.

The conſtitution that is approved of, ſhould be the conſtitution of the whole empire; there can be no local peculiarities that ſhould make it good for one and worſe for another: neither ought it to be confined to America, but in every other part of the world, where a territory belonging to the crown of Great Britain may be important enough to merit its being declared by a vote of parliament, to conſtitute a part of the Britiſh empire, that vote ſhould give it a right to the common conſtitution; neither is

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it to be conceived, that on any part of the globe where man is in a ſtate of civilization, he ſhould be ſo peculiarly formed as to be incapable of a rational freedom.

Thus every province would form a little empire within itſelf, ſubject to its own laws, and obedient to its own regulations; like a ſmaller ſyſtem in the conſtruction of the univerſe, that whilſt it ſeems only to regard its own center, is actuated by that common principle that ſuſtains the whole, which whilſt it regulates all the motions peculiar to that ſyſtem, at the ſame time makes it ſubſervient to a higher ſcheme, and bends it about one common centre, where Great Britain is placed with power and dignity to controul the whole.

We have thus conſidered the conſtitution of the Britiſh empire, which was the ſtep neceſſary to be taken before we could be enabled properly to judge of this propoſed ſeparation. It remains now to conſider what effect the Britiſh empire thus conſtituted, may have on Great Britain,

tain, the mother ſtate. And here there are three principal conſiderations that offer themſelves to our view: the firſt is, what effect it may have on our trade, by which I mean our manufactures and our internal produce; the ſecond, the effect it may have on our commerce; and the third, the effect it may have on our political conſtitution.

It has been for ſome time the practice with every ſtate of Europe, particularly to attend to what relates to the trade of their reſpective dominions; and ſo fully are they ſenſible of the importance of this object, and with ſuch eagle eyes is it ſurveyed, that unleſs it be in articles of neceſſity, ſuch as is corn, which ſupercedes the force of edicts, for there is a neceſſity that men ſhould eat; but in other articles of trade, ſuch as are ſimply of manufacture, they will take eſpecial care that you ſhould gain no great profit from your intercourſe with them: —if you ſurvey what is now going forward in Europe, and what has lately been tranſacted in this way, you will be convinced

vinced of this truth; particularly, if you conſider the conduct of Portugal: but this you will ſay is unjuſt, and contrary to treaties.—With reſpect to injuſtice, we do not ſeem inclined to obtain redreſs; and with reſpect to treaties, they give no ſecurity at this day:—to ſay the truth, it ſeems to be expecting too much to have the power of giving law to the trade of a kingdom not abſolutely dependent on our own, and even too much if it was ſo.

As matters are now circumſtanced, it ſeems as if the induſtry of a people would find no exerciſe but in that intercourſe that may prevail among the ſeveral parts of the ſame empire, and in this view, Great Britain ſeems peculiarly happy, for her empire is eſtabliſhed in all the quarters of the globe: in every latitude, and in all climates, ſhe furniſhes nothing but what her provinces want, and ſhe ſcarce wants any thing but what they produce. —This is the life of trade, that is founded in mutual wants; in what part of the empire this intercourſe may produce the greateſt

greateſt opulence is not very material to enquire, it will be, I believe, neither in Great Britain or America; it will be in that country that produces the moſt of the natural productions to be uſed in manufactures, and where the induſtry of mankind can be moſt happily exerted in forming them: the dominions dependent on the crown of Great Britain in Aſia, exhibit advantages in this way, that it would be idle in any other country to lay claim to.

Complaint has been made, that the manufactures of this country hurt the manufactures of Britain; but the complaint ſeems not properly underſtood:—as this country is happily within the Britiſh empire, regulations may be made, ſo that it does not materially prejudice the manufactures of Britain; but it would have been the ruin of ſome of them, had it been in the hands of any other European ſtate, ſince whoever is poſſeſſed of this country may give law to the manufactures of the world, where cotton is the baſis.

And here we may be allowed to admire the fortune of Britain;—whilſt in the laſt war her attention was turned, and her ſtrength principally exerted in the Weſt: it was in the Eaſt that the country was conteſted, that moſt materially effected her. Her enemy had every advantage; but to counteract theſe advantages on the part of the enemy, and this neglect on the part of Britain, there appeared a number of men that exhibited ſuch a diſplay of military and political abilities, as were, perhaps, never produced by this or any other country, at one time: theſe abilities gave this empire to Britain, which on every other conſideration ſhe ought to have loſt.

Though it may be impoſſible preciſely to aſcertain the reſpective advantages that the ſeveral parts of the empire may receive from this intercourſe, yet one may venture to ſay, that from the advantages that Britain receives from the navigation act, that palladium of the empire, (to uſe an expreſſion I have heard attributed to a gentleman lately diſtinguiſhed among us)

us) and from that ſpirit of induſtry and enterprize that is found in her people, that on a general ſtatement the balance may be found in her favour; and this, perhaps, is as much as may be required, for there are ſome that think, that in an empire like ours, Britain may have too much trade and too much opulence: hence the opinion that is every where ſo freely given, that we over-trade ourſelves. —There ſeems to be no reaſon for theſe apprehenſions: a ſtate cannot have too much trade, or too much opulence, where the trade is not forced by unnatural methods, and the opulence is only procured by induſtry. If induſtry produces too much wealth by one way, that wealth will produce effects, that will diſcharge the wealth by other ways; there is an action and re-action here, ſomething like what anatomiſts tell us there is in the heart, which, at the ſame time that it receives the blood by ſome channels, throws it back again by others; which inſtead of being the deſtruction of the

noble organ employed, creates a briſk circulation that gives life and vigour to the whole frame.

The ſtate of the trade between America and Britain that you mention, and which I have recited in the beginning of this Letter, from the articles that compoſe it, muſt be the trade of ſome of the northern colonies, where there being no ſtaple, the trade cannot be very great, and that, I ſuppoſe, againſt us; but the ſouthern colonies having valuable ſtaples, the caſe is reverſed: you will therefore obſerve that America may be uſeful to Britain, both in what ſhe gives, and in what ſhe takes away.

Per damna ———
Ducit opes ———

There is an anima medica in the body politic, as well as in the natural body, which it is almoſt always ſafeſt to truſt to: temperance is the ſupport of the latter, as ſome general wiſe regulations are of the former: a too ſedulous attention to minute circumſtances, which it may be ſup-

ſuppoſed we do not always fully comprehend, is hurtful to both. If theſe general regulations are favourable to the juſt rights of mankind, they will naturally call forth their induſtry, which will be exerted till it attains that point that it ought to arrive at, and where it ought to ſtop: to attempt to force it further is the empiriciſm of politics.—Almoſt all bounties are in this way.—Things will proportion themſelves if you will let them alone, and they will do it with a preciſion and accuracy that it is vain to expect from the interpoſition of men.

I have ſaid that a ſtate cannot be too opulent when its wealth is only obtained by induſtry; but if a ſtate receives any conſiderable influx of wealth, by means not dependent upon induſtry, that ſtate muſt inevitably be ruined. It would be eaſy demonſtrably to ſhew, that this conſequence follows. But the time will not admit; we are got into a ſubject that would require a well digeſted treatiſe, and is ſcarce proper for this Letter that muſt be the haſty production of a day.

—When

—When the advantages that Britain derives from the Eaſt Indies are mentioned, it ſurpaſſes the ſuffrance of all patience to hear enumerated (which is almoſt always done) among other advantages, the benefit that has accrued to her from the introduction of private wealth: by which is principally underſtood the wealth acquired by rapine. They tell you of a wholſome proviſion made for the ſtate, at the ſame time that they have adminiſtered the moſt deadly poiſon: it is hoped that this was done under ſuch peculiar circumſtances, that the guilt productive of the meaſure may not juſtly be imputed to the nation: but if it ſhould, we need not fear the ſcourge of a vindictive Providence. The wealth thus introduced will pay the full wages of the iniquity.

I wiſh to apply what I have ſaid to every part of the Britiſh empire in all parts of the world, or there would have been no reaſon to have mentioned this danger, as likely to happen from our union with America: It can happen from our

our union with any country but by two ways; the one is by the working of mines containing the precious metals, the other is by an oppreſſive conduct. Britain having none of theſe mines in her empire, the danger is ſtopped by the firſt way; by the ſecond, it is ſtopped by her conſtitution. It is ſaid, that care is taken that we ſhould not again experience this evil from the Eaſt Indies, but it ſeems as if no effectual care could be taken, till by the introduction of the Britiſh conſtitution we impower the country to take care of itſelf.

We have thus conſidered the queſtion in the way that it may affect trade; the ſubject is intricate: and though we cannot here accurately ſtate all the advantages and diſadvantages that offer themſelves for our conſideration; yet, in the main, it is hoped it may appear, that it is the union, and not the ſeparation of Britain and America, that will promote trade.

We proceed now to conſider this queſtion, as it may affect commerce; and here

here there is no difficulty, for though nature may have ſet limits to our trade, ſhe has ſet none to our commerce, which may be, under the conſtitution we have mentioned, as great as can be conceived, even to the making it (if the proper advantage is taken of our ſituation) the commerce of the world. This ſo forcibly ſtrikes with conviction the mind of every one who at all attends to this ſubject, that we will make no further ſtay here than only to obſerve, that as a maritime force muſt be the ſecurity of this empire, commerce, in furniſhing men and ſhipping, furniſhes the eſſential requiſites for this force, which force, without being furniſhed in the way of commerce, it is in vain for any ſtate to expect. If your book ſhould bring to paſs the ſeparation you recommend, the enemies of Britain may ſay of the dean of Glouceſter, what Hannibal is reported to have ſaid of the conſul Æmilius, when he ordered the cavalry to diſmount at the battle of Cannæ, " I had rather he had

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delivered them up to me, bound hand and foot."

The laſt thing to be conſidered, is how this union of Britain with America may affect the ſecurities of our political conſtitution.

The old gentleman, your friend, to whom this propoſed ſeparation appeared ſo ſtrange, was unacquainted, it ſeems, with the hiſtory of the riſe and fall of empires: and what if he had been ever ſo well inſtructed on this ſubject? He might, indeed, have been acquainted with the revolutions that have happened in two or three great empires that have ariſen and fallen in the courſe of the world; but this wonderful knowledge would have ſerved him no better, in judging of your propoſal, than his knowledge, if he had it, of the revolutions of Jupiter's ſatellites. To the experience of hiſtory, he might have joined the inſtruction of philoſophers; ſtill it would have been the experience and inſtruction on a different thing. The world was never acquainted with any thing in any degree ſimilar to

the Britiſh empire, therefore from what has happened to the empires of which we have had any knowledge, no conſequences with reſpect to the Britiſh empire can be drawn.

Men are apt to believe, becauſe they think they have obſerved, that there is ſomething of the ſame principle of increaſe and decay in the body politic, as in the natural body, which proceeds from infancy to youth, from youth to manhood, 'till it arrives at that point which nature has allotted for its utmoſt perfection; from which it declines through every ſtage of debility and weakneſs, 'till it comes to its diſſolution. We know the ſad lot of humanity, and know that thus it muſt neceſſarily be: but the political body is not under the laws of invincible neceſſity; effects here proceed from human operations, and are accurately deducible from the cauſes that produce them. The conſtitution of Rome, for inſtance, was moſt admirably formed for the obtaining of empire, therefore ſhe obtained it: it was moſt wretchedly formed

ed either for ſecuring her own freedom, or the duration of the empire, therefore Rome was enſlaved, and the empire totally ſubverted; and ſo oppreſſive was her conduct to the provinces, that you may find, ſir, that they dated their happineſs from the ſubverſion of the republic; and this gives no equivocal proof of the badneſs of her government, when the introduction of a military deſpotiſm was found a happineſs.

As there is no reaſon to predict the diſſolution of the Britiſh empire from longevity, ſo neither can that event be looked for from the magnitude of her empire: whatever is ſaid by Monteſquieu and others againſt too extenſive a dominion, is ſaid on a ſtate's holding diſtant provinces by a forced ſubjection; and therefore does not apply itſelf here, as Britain does not deſire to hold her empire under a forced ſubjection, at leaſt I am ſure it is what ſhe ought not to deſire. The declaration you would have made, that the colonies ſhould be free and independent, is offered under a de-

ceitful appearance, as they never can be ſo free and independent as whilſt they remain conſtituent parts of the Britiſh empire; nor will there ever be wanting a principle ſufficiently ſtrong to hold the whole empire compactly together, whilſt ſelf-intereſt is found a leading principle in the human breaſt.

Nor is the empire leſs happily formed for ſecuring her own duration, than for continuing to us our free conſtitution.—Under this conſtitution the empire has grown up; under this conſtitution it can be alone ſupported; deſtroy it, and it is evident you deſtroy that principle that can alone hold it together; and its ſeveral parts deprived of their proper attraction, will immediately fly off, in a thouſand different directions, as their intereſt or fancy may direct. The ſame things, in politics as in phyſics, are often found to be reciprocally both cauſe and effect:—the provinces are free becauſe Great Britain is free; to ſay Great Britain is free, becauſe the provinces are ſo, may not, perhaps, be ſtrict-

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ly allowable, as ſhe was in poſſeſſion of this freedom before ſhe knew the provinces; but they may be conſidered as cauſes, as they promote and ſecure the continuance of this freedom. In this view, the larger the empire is, the ſtronger ſecurity is given for a continuance of the liberty of Britain, and of every part of the empire; as great bodies are not ſo eaſily overturned as ſmall ones.

Thus, ſir, I have endeavoured to ſhew, that your propoſal of a ſeparation betweeen Great Britain and her American colonies, muſt be ruinous to America; that conſidering them as united under one common conſtitution, which in a very great degree they are at preſent, tho' not ſo perfectly ſo as might be wiſhed, this union is favourable to the trade of Britain, that it forms the baſis of her commerce, and gives ſecurity to the freedom of her conſtitution. And I would beg leave to apply what I have ſaid more particularly to you, as ſupporting the character of a miniſter of the goſpel,

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and conſequently of a citizen of the world; I would wiſh to point out the proſpect that the Britiſh empire holds out, for promoting the happineſs of mankind, for ſecuring their religious liberties and civil rights.

You know, ſir, that we have been graciouſly made to hope, that a ſtate in this world ſhould be prepared more favourable for mankind, than any they have yet experienced; let us hope, ſir, that under the auſpices of this empire it may be prepared. And here give me leave to wiſh, that the pure uncorrupted religion of the goſpel might be the religion of the empire, that from this elevation it might illuminate the world, and diſpel thoſe clouds with which ſcepticiſm, by the aid of political religion on the one hand, and fanaticiſm, by the aid of ſuperſtition on the other, have darkened the human underſtanding.

Under this ſtate it may be ſuppoſed, that there will be fanciful men who may chooſe to be wiſe above what is written; but if they have not the adroitneſs (as they

they heretofore have had) to engage the civil magiſtrate as a party in their diſputes, their conteſts will never become extenſively miſchievous, nor will the bulk of mankind endure, ſo as to make it a matter of any great conſequence, that a practical inſtitution, given us as a rule for our life and manners here, and a foundation for our hopes hereafter, ſhould be made a ſubject for metaphyſical jargon, and ſenſeleſs diſputes.

It may happen that the conjectures of theſe men may be ſome of them abſurd, ſome of them impious, and, taken together, contradictory to each other; but the liberty of free enquiry demands that they ſhould be indulged, that they ſhould be allowed to inſtruct and amuſe, perplex and plague themſelves, and thoſe who chooſe to attend to them;—but in the name of common ſenſe, ſir, let not civil government ſo far depart from the juſt purpoſe of its inſtitution, as to give the reveries of theſe men, the ſanction of the ſtate, by ingrafting them into the code of the conſtitution.

I cannot conclude without expreſſing the concern I feel for the reſentment that appears among us, at the late miſbehaviour of the Americans; without, I think, making the proper allowance for the reaſon that has been given for it. There is not, I believe, a ſingle perſon in the Britiſh dominions but who will readily confeſs, that the proceedings of government, with reſpect to America, have been reprehenſible.—When the Stamp-Act took place, one part of the kingdom juſtified, whilſt the other part cenſured the conduct of adminiſtration; on the repeal of the Stamp-Act, the two parts changed places, and the juſtifiers became the cenſurers: and leſt there might be a few to whom this doing and undoing might be acceptable, and who would be thankful for peace, by whatever ſlovenly means obtained, it was thought proper to diſoblige theſe men too, for no ſooner was the deſirable tranquillity in ſome degree reſtored, but recourſe was immediately had again to this offending mode of taxation: and now

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that the houſe is thus ſet on fire, we affect to wonder that it ſhould burn.

It is much to be wiſhed, that a veil could be caſt over meaſures, that have been ſo conducted, that an impartial obſerver would be at a loſs to determine on which ſide the Atlantic to impute the greateſt blame. And that this ſhould be effected, not by bungling temporary meaſures, of undoing to-day what was done yeſterday, nor by paying the Eaſt-India company for a cargo of tea; but by the formation of a conſtitution for the Britiſh empire, which, at the ſame time that it provided for the proper and neceſſary pre-eminence of Britain, might be made to preſerve the juſt rights of a free people to the provinces; and to hand down the Britiſh empire as one compact body, with honour, ſtability, and ſafety to the lateſt poſterity.

If the preſent bill now depending in parliament for blocking up the port of Boſton, contains the whole intention of government relative to America, it ſeems to be one of thoſe temporary expedients, which, whether uſed in public affairs,

or private concerns, ſeldom fail finally to terminate in diſgrace; that it will ſucceed for the preſent purpoſe I have not the leaſt doubt; for if there is a grain of underſtanding with the party at Boſton, they will not bring things to extremities at preſent; it is an experiment that they can make but once in their lives, and I ſhould think they would chooſe to make it with a fairer proſpect of ſucceſs than they have at preſent; and the miniſter would do well to bear in mind, that when the opportunity offers, the occaſion will not be wanting, which the preſent anarchy in the conſtitution of the colonies will always readily adminiſter.—The meaſure that procures the preſent peace ſhould guard againſt the future danger; and this ſeems attainable by no other way than that of forming an equitable conſtitution for the Britiſh empire.

The objection, that the preſent time is not ſuitable for a reviſal of the American charters, ſeems not very properly made; ſince the queſtion is not about ſuiting the time to the meaſure; the

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meaſure as it happens, having been brought to the time; and though the time in ſome inſtances may not be ſo favourable for the undertaking as might be wiſhed, (chiefly owing, I ſuppoſe, to the miſerable diſſenſions that prevail among ourſelves,) yet in other very material inſtances, it could never have been more favourable.—It is not likely that we ſhould receive any interruption in this buſineſs from the powers of Europe; and this is a circumſtance of the greateſt importance; for if it has been with reaſon objected to the enemies of Britain, (and I have ſomewhere or other ſeen the objection made) that they were not ſufficiently careful to prevent the union of England with Scotland; the objection muſt be much more forcibly urged, on their unconcernedly ſuffering a conſtitutional union of the Britiſh empire; the latter event muſt be more deſtructive to their ambitious ſchemes (if yet they have them) than ever the former was; though, undoubtedly, that was ſo in a very great degree; for if the Britiſh empire could be made to act as one compact body

body, which, if properly united, I ſuppoſe it might; it would not only be ſuperior to the inſults from a family compact, but as it ſhould ſeem from a confederacy of the world. Add to this, that our army and navy are at preſent equal to any ſervice the public may require of them; and the prince on the throne has no other object in view, but that of promoting the common happineſs of all his people.

I have now gone through what I had to offer on your propoſal of a ſeparation between Great Britain and her American colonies. My letter is longer than I expected it would have been, when I ſat down. On looking back, I have to fear, that the haſty production of one who never wrote for the preſs may be too incorrect; and that I may have failed in any inſtance in that reſpect with which,

I am, &c.

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